

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 11535 090118Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /069 W

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P R 090034Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7266

INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO VIA POUCH

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MS

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF ECHEVERRIA VISIT TO SAN ANTONIO

1. SUMMARY: MORNING PRESS COVERAGE SEPT 8 OF ECHEVERRIA INAUGURATION OF SAN ANTONIO TRADE FAIR STRESSED CONTENT OF HIS REMARKS, WHICH WE READ AS MODERATE, APPROPRIATE FOR OCCASION, WITH ONLY A PASSING REFERENCE TO HECKLING INCIDENT. AFTERNOON PRESS HEADLINES "APOLOGY" OFFERED BY CHICANO GROUP FOR INCIDENT, AT SAME TIME EMPHASIZING THAT WIRE SERVICES EXAGGERATED AND DISTORTED IMPORTANCE OF CHICANO JOSTLING THE PRESIDENT. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS REPORTED ON FRONT PAGES, WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. MORNING PRESS SEPTEMBER 8 VIRTUALLY IGNORED HECKLING OR JUSTLING INCIDENT WHICH WE UNDERSTOOD RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE TREATMENT BY US PAPERS AND WIRE SERVICES. PRESS HERE STRESSED SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT OF PRESIDENT'S REMARKS OPENING TRADE FAIR, WHICH WE READ AS MODERATE, APPROPRIATE FOR OCCASION.

3. APPARENTLY IN REACTION TO US WIRE SERVICE TREATMENT OF HECKLING INCIDENT, AFTERNOON PRESS HEADLINED APOLOGY TENDERED ECHEVERRIA BY CHICANO

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 11535 090118Z

SPOKESMAN AND EMPHASIZED THAT WIRE SERVICE REPORTS HAD

BLOWN UP STORY OUT OF PROPORTION. MEXICAN COVERAGE DID NOT REFER TO PRISON CONDITIONS AS CAUSE OF CHICANO PROTEST. STORIES QUOTED CHICANO LEADER REIES TIJERINA AS DISAVOWING MEXICAN AMERICAN INVOLVED IN INCIDENT AS MAN WITH CRIMINAL RECORD, NOT A CHICANO LEADER. AFTERNOON PRESS ALSO PLAYED ECHEVERRIA'S APPARENTLY IMPROMPTU REMARKS EXHORTING MEXICAN AMERICANS TO RETAIN IDENTITY WITH MEXICAN HERITAGE, TO WORK FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WITHIN US AND TO DO SO WITHIN US LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS. COMMENT: DIFFERING AFTERNOON REACTION WAS CLEARLY PROMPTED BY TREATMENT GIVEN TO INCIDENT IN US PAPERS. INCIDENT MAY GET ATTENTION FOR DAY OR SO, BUT WE DO NOT THINK IT WILL BECOME AN ISSUE. END COMMENT.

4. PRESS ALSO GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS SYMPATHETIC TO MEXICAN REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM, DOWNPLAYING LETTER OF SEVENTY-SIX CONGRESSMEN, AND EMPHASIZING CORDIAL STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS AMONG OTHER TOPICS. AMBASSADOR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN QUOTED ACCURATELY. PRESS HAS NOT YET EDITORIALIZED.
THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MEXICO11535
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760339-1349
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760978/aaaacoqp.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by ellisob>; APPROVED <02 NOV 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS COVERAGE OF ECHEVERRIA VISIT TO SAN ANTONIO
TAGS: PFOR, MX, (ECHEVERRIA ALVAREZ, LUIS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006